Flashback

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WCHS Marks 70 years in 2021

founded in 1951

Waler J. Lemke, WCHS founder, with his parakeet, as photographed by Ernie Deane in 1959

Washington County Historical Society

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Preserving our past for future generations

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On the cover:
This photo of Walter J. Lemke with his pet bird was taken by renowned Arkansas journalist Ernie Deane. The year 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of the Washington County Historical Society, founded by Lemke in 1951. Photograph courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Frances Deane Alexander Collection (S-2012-137-779).

Fayetteville and the Influenza Epidemic of 1918[1]

By J. B. Hogan

History Repeating.

The initial reports of the virus that came to be known as COVID-19[2] first appeared at the very end of 2019, but 2020 will be remembered as the year this particularly virulent strain of flu morphed into a pandemic. Nearly forgotten by the time COVID-19 appeared, a similar health crisis had nonetheless struck before.

Just over 100 years before, in 1918, the world, nation, and Fayetteville faced another deadly influenza outbreak. Improperly labeled the Spanish Flu, this virus broke out during the final year of World War I and spread through military units and then into the civilian population with extraordinary rapidity and virulence.

Rather than originating in Spain,[3] most researchers point to a small farm in rural Haskell County in southwest Kansas as the most likely source of the 1918 Influenza.[4] In January, a local doctor named Loring Miner reported to the U. S. Public Health Service a severe outbreak of the flu with patients suffering from pneumonia-like symptoms.[5] Dr. Miner's report was mostly ignored at the time, but it is supposed today that a young soldier from Haskell County brought the influenza with him to Camp Funston, a part of the Camp Riley (now Fort Riley) complex near Junction City, Kansas.[6]

J.B. Hogan is a local historian and author who has published more than 270 stories and poems and 11 books. He is a frequent contributor to Flashback.

Influenza victims in an emergency hospital near Camp Funston (now Fort Riley) in Kansas in 1918. Photograph from the Associated Press/National Museum of Health.

Wave I – March-Summer 1918. On the morning of March 11, 1918,[7] at Camp Funston, a cook, Private Albert Gitchell, went on sick call with flu-like symptoms.[8] By noon, 107 soldiers were sick and by day's end some 522 soldiers had reported in ill and were exhibiting the same symptoms – fever, sore throat, and headache. At the end of March, 1,100 troops were sick and 48 had died.[9]

Because of the movement of troops both stateside and then overseas, the disease swept through the United States military virtually unabated. Within weeks, camps all over the country were reporting large numbers of men with influenza symptoms. It was said a "river of soldiers moved between Funston, other army bases, and France."[10]

Out of the 36 largest army camps in the country, some 24 of them suffered from the influenza outbreak. In addition, 30 of the 50 largest cities in the nation, most of them near military installations, had a spike in influenza deaths that spring.[11]

"Illness rates were high," during the first wave, "but death rates in most locales were not appreciably above normal."[12] With the mortality rate being similar to that of the annual flu outbreak, most commentators actually view the first wave as "relatively mild."[13]

Because the first wave was not seen as overly dangerous, in terms of mortality, no quarantines were reported during the spring of 1918. However, when our troops were shipped overseas, the epidemic spread rapidly to become a full-fledged pandemic. Some three-fourths of French troops, one-half of the British military, and almost a million German soldiers were infected and ill.[14]

As for Fayetteville, it was essentially untouched by the first wave of the pandemic, although it had begun to lose men in combat, including Lynn Shelton, the first local soldier to die in the war.[15] However, by late summer and early fall of 1918, when the second wave of the influenza hit with such lethal ferocity,[16] even this little Ozark Mountain hill town would not be spared. A difficult time lay ahead.

Top, UofA President John C. Futrall. Below, SATC student-soldiers on campus. Courtesy University of Arkansas Special Collections, 1918 Razorback Yearbook, pp. 25, 116.

WAVE II – AUGUST-FALL 1918. If Camp Funston in Kansas was Ground Zero for the world-wide 1918 Influenza outbreak, then the University of Arkansas played that role locally, and it, too, had its source in the military, even if many of these soldiers were also students.

Beginning in early summer 1918, the campus became a basic training location of sorts. A contingent of 300 draftees arrived at the university on June 14, 1918, for what was called an army or soldiers' school.[17] Drills began on June 17, 1918, and another 300 more soldiers were due in by August 15.[18]

In addition, back in February 1918, the United States War Department had created the Student Army Training Corps (SATC). The SATC temporarily replaced the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) on campuses throughout the nation. Some 530 campuses[19] welcomed the student-soldiers and became, in effect, military enclaves with colleges being governed by both a military officer and a civilian head, typically the current president of the school. Here the collegiate side was guided by University of Arkansas president John C. Futrall, while the military ranks were under the command of Major George E. Martin.

SATC troops were paid $30 per month and entered the program with the rank of private.[20] The program was to begin with the start of the regular fall semester on October 1, 1918, with an expected enrollment of 800 student-soldiers and 400 regular students.[21]

While plans for the fall semester continued, signs of the influenza began to appear. On August 26, the *Fayetteville Democrat* (Daily) ran an article on "Influenza and Propinquity." The article warned citizens about the "Spanish Flu" and suggested people keep a distance of five feet between themselves and anyone with flu-like symptoms. They also advised everyone to refrain from being too affectionate, and kissing was definitely taboo.[22]

The source of Wave II, like much of the pandemic in general, came from our own military. It is believed to have started on August 27, 1918, when an American ship returned to Boston from overseas. Apparently only a handful of sailors brought the disease back with them, but within two weeks some 2,000 sailors in the local naval district had been infected.[23]

Here locally and about a month later, on September 27, the newspa-

per warned residents that the "Spanish Influenza" was sweeping across the United States "like a prairie fire" and "would soon reach Fayetteville."[24]

This "fire," of course, was the second wave of the 1918 Influenza and it would be the largest and deadliest period of the pandemic.[25] Within days of this warning the influenza would strike the university and then Fayetteville itself in rapid succession.

In an article stating that 1,000 students were now at the University of Arkansas, authorities reassured the populace that every "precaution is being taken by the military authorities against the possible spread of Spanish influenza."[26] The next day, even though the Little Rock *Arkansas Democrat* reported that as "yet no cases of the 'flu' have been found," the university nonetheless put the school under "24 Hour Quarentine" (sic).[27]

University president Futrall described the quarantine as "merely a precautionary measure against any possible spread of Spanish influenza."[28] To this point, the outbreak was limited to the university campus where several cases of the disease had been reported.[29]

The following day, October 5, there were more influenza-related stories. Red Cross and university infirmary nurse Belle Blanchard[30] of Fayetteville issued a call for blankets and at least 100 pillows for sick soldiers on campus. Right after nurse Blanchard's front page request was an article informing citizens that the planned and war-related Liberty Loan Women in War Work parade and program had been called off by request of the City Board of Health.[31] A similar parade had been held on September 28 in Philadelphia and was blamed for a huge spike in the epidemic in that city that cost hundreds if not thousands of lives.[32]

On October 7, the University of Arkansas, already having delayed its original opening date of October 1, announced it would postpone opening for yet another week until October 14 – and by October 16, the hope was to start on October 21. In a separate story on October 7, an unidentified spokesperson for the university stated that, contrary to circulated reports of a death at the student infirmary, "no patient has died" and that while there were 15 significant cases at the infirmary, none were in a "serious condition." An additional story told residents that "there have been no fatalities here and it is believed that the malady is receiving a definite check." The article also informed readers that it was "expected that normal conditions will soon prevail and that no special quarantine will be necessary."[33]

The very next day, October 8, 1918, the Arkansas State Board of Health issued a statewide quarantine.[34] And the following day, October 9, the city of Fayetteville itself, with a population of about 5,000, was placed under strict quarantine with the paper reporting "No Public Gatherings Allowed." The official order from W. J. Reynolds, secretary of the City Board of Health, shut down "all schools, picture shows, churches, lodges" and even "home gatherings" in order to prevent the "spread of the prevailing Spanish Influenza."[35]

Infirmary on the UofA campus during the influenza epidemic. Courtesy University of Arkansas Special Collections, 1918 Razorback Yearbook, p. 28, online file.

While the local newspaper headline read "Situation in City Not Alarming," Fayetteville residents learned that at least 235 young soldiers and students at the University of Arkansas had come down with the "malady."[36] The *Arkansas Democrat* of the same day added more details about the epidemic. Some 65 percent of the student body had gotten the influenza in the past week and the disease had "spread all over town." Classes were again delayed and the Razorback football team had been unable to practice.[37]

The next day, October 10, the newspaper reported that flu conditions on campus were "better," but another article pointed out that the home economics department would now provide food for the sick SATC soldiers and that one of the young men, Harry Lee Musgroves, 20, of Grays, Arkansas, had died of the influenza, the first fatality at the university.[38] On Saturday, October 12, university military authorities suggested that because the influenza situation had improved on campus, classes could begin on October 21. In town, the epidemic claimed its probable first victim when "prominent" young businessman Lucian Mitchell succumbed to the illness.[39]

On October 13, SATC troop William V. Walter, 21, of Stigler, Oklahoma, died of the influenza on the University of Arkansas campus.[40] Two days later, fellow student-soldier William K. Dyer, 19, of Fort Smith also died from the disease.[41] On October 16, university officials declared that the epidemic on campus was "now under complete control" and that only 20 new cases had developed over the previous four days and none the day before. Classes could hopefully begin, as planned before, on October 21. In this same article, the university listed the names of six SATC soldiers who had died of the influenza. In addition to Musgroves, Walter, and Dyer, already announced, the list now included L. T. White, of Malvern; W. A. O'Dell, from Stuttgart, and John M. Toomey, of Rogers.[42]

The following day, October 17, two more Fayetteville residents were reported lost to the epidemic. Frank R. Moore, who had been a contractor for the SATC canteen on the University of Arkansas campus, and Fred Page, 29, who worked for the Fayetteville Ice Company. Both men died at the Fayetteville City Hospital.[43] On Friday, October 18, after a meeting between university and city officials, the City Board of Health

gave its permission to the university to open on Monday or Tuesday of the following week. Subsequent pages in that edition listed more deaths attributed to the influenza, including both locals and SATC men.[44]

The very next day, however, the City Board of Health reversed itself and, on the advice of Dr. C. W. Garrison, head of the State Board of Health, continued the university quarantine "indefinitely." Classes were delayed again, this time until at least Monday, October 28. Furthermore, in a separate article, Fayetteville City Health Officer W. N. Yates, responding to reports of "non-observance," made it clear that the quarantine laws "must be observed more rigidly."[45] Oddly enough, on the last page of the October 19 newspaper, an article about the SATC maintained that the "epidemic of Spanish influenza…has now been completely checked. No new cases have been reported."[46]

The Monday, October 21, newspaper listed more local deaths, including an infant girl who died of acute pneumonia which she caught from her mother who was herself seriously ill.[47] The next day, Tuesday, October 22, had hopeful news as president Futrall announced that university students could begin to get classified for classes the next day, Wednesday. The university, another article proclaimed, was given a "clean bill of health by the Fayetteville Board of Health" and classes could begin as soon as the State Board of Health lifted the quarantine.[48]

Back on October 19, Washington County Sheriff Mack Morton had ordered all county schools to remain closed, and on October 23 he issued a notice shutting down the Circuit Court. The notice cited the epidemic as the cause and gave no reopening date, just that court would continue at "some future date." This same day, Dr. Garrison let everyone know that the state would not lift the quarantine until the "danger is past." He hoped that it could be "modified" or lifted "by the first of the month" (November).[49]

Although the emphasis up to this point had been focused on how the pandemic had hit the SATC troops, on October 24, the newspaper reported that all but four women sequestered in Carnall Hall because of the epidemic were well. The article revealed that recently there had been as many as 58 coeds sick with influenza.[50]

By Saturday, October 26, the epidemic appeared to be slowing and the strict quarantine would be modified to allow church services the following day, although children under 18 years of age would not be permitted to attend.[51] On Monday, October 28, the University of Arkansas finally opened for the semester, delayed nearly a month. Local authorities said the response to the disease on campus had been a "marvelous success" and the "epidemic has now been completely checked." Some 1,500 students were said to have attended the first day of classes.[52]

On the back page of the October 29 *Fayetteville Democrat* (Daily), it was said that the epidemic began locally on October 1, when the first group of regular students arrived in town, and that within a few days 337 cases of

Mrs. Laura Lighton. Courtesy University of Arkansas Special Collections, Lighton Family Papers, MC 779, Box 25, Folder 4, item 32.

influenza had been reported. University officials made a point in the article of expressing their appreciation to all the local people who helped them combat the epidemic on campus.[53] President Futrall said that "without question it was due in large part to their unselfish devotion that the epidemic was mastered in so short a time."[54] Foremost among the locals, specifically women who helped out with the epidemic on campus, was Laura Lighton, wife and mother of two of the town's best known authors, her husband Will and son Bud Lighton.

The newspaper for Halloween, Thursday, October 31, 1918, had a very positive notice on the front page. Inside a box was the headline "QUARANTINE TO BE LIFTED," signed by W. J. Reynolds, still secretary of the City Board of Health. Mr. Reynolds' announcement further read: "By order of the City Board of Health, the influenza quarantine will be lifted at noon Saturday, November 2."[55] And so it was.

After 24 days, the quarantine was over in Fayetteville. Schools would reopen, churches could hold regular services, restaurants and theatres were able to welcome their customers back. The local Pastors Association took out an ad in the newspaper with the heading: "WIDE OPEN DOORS," and school superintendent F. S. Root stated that all "public schools in Fayetteville will open Monday morning" (November 4).[56] Later, Professor Root would present a plan for students to make up the missed quarantine time by shortening holiday breaks and by holding classes on Saturdays beginning in January and lasting the rest of the school year.[57]

There was more good news on the horizon. On Thursday, November 7, 1918, a huge front page headline in the newspaper read: "PEACE." The war "over there" was coming to an end.[58] The Monday, November 11, edition carried in the same large letters the headline: "PEACE TERMS."[59] The war to end all wars was at last over and the epidemic that had accompanied it was ending too – at least for the time being.

Later in the month, Dr. W. N. Yates, who had headed up the local Board of Health throughout the quarantine, died of Bright's Disease.[60] He was replaced by Dr. C. B. Paddock. A few days later, Lt. Col. George E. Martin, who had commanded the university SATC and been promoted from the rank of Major, retired from active service,[61] and just four days later it was announced that the SATC would be discontinued immediately, although it was not totally demobilized until the middle of December.[62]

We have just received a limited stock of
IOPHENE
A powerful prophylactic against the infection of Influenza
This preparation was used by the 300 employes of a large cannery in St. Louis and only one case of Influenza developed among that number
Fifty Cents per Bottle
Red Cross Drug Store
"ON THE SQUARE"
TELEPHONE 430

Red Cross Drug Store ad for Iophene flu medicine. *Fayetteville Democrat*, November 2, 1918, p. 3.

Wave III – December 1918-April 1919. In retrospect, the third wave of the 1918 Influenza could not have been more predictable, with hundreds of thousands of U. S. soldiers and sailors returning from locations at home and abroad that had been ravaged by the epidemic. Naturally, the third wave started up within a month of the end of the war. But the remarkable thing about it is that this wave was nowhere near as lethal as the second, despite the sudden and massive reintegration of our military men back into civilian society.

It was not, however, benign, just not as impactful. By early December 1918, the influenza was increasing around the state of Arkansas and schools in Des Arc, Camden, Newport, Rogers, and Pine Bluff were closed because of it.[63] On December 12, a headline in the local newspaper read: "NEW INFLUENZA SCOURGE THREATENS THE COUNTRY."[64]

By mid-January of the new year, 1919, Little Rock was preparing for a probable second quarantine,[65] and Major J. C. Geiger, United States Public Health Service officer in the capitol city warned "against the danger of a repetition of the influenza epidemic."[66] Yet by January 20 it was established that the state would not be quarantined again for the flu,[67] and the next day the Little Rock *Arkansas Gazette* reported influenza cases were steadily declining.[68] The third wave was much less potent than the second one had been, and based on the absence of stories about the influenza in its local papers, Fayetteville seems to have hardly been affected by this outbreak at all. Other parts of the world, especially Australia, and some large U. S. cities like Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and St. Louis [69] suffered thousands of deaths, but it was not so on the local front.

One notable victim of the third wave of influenza was U. S. President Woodrow Wilson who contracted a severe case of the disease while in Paris, France, for post-World War peace talks. President Wilson became very sick with the flu in April 1919, and though he recovered, he suffered a nearly debilitating stroke later that fall. It has been suggested that his death in 1924 at only 67 years old may have been hastened by his bout with the influenza.[70]

Wave IV – Early 1920. Although some commentators only recognize three waves of the 1918 Influenza, many others grant that there was a fourth wave and it hit in early 1920. This outbreak was isolated in a few European countries, including Spain and Germany, and in other nations such as Peru and Japan. Here in the United States, it mostly affected larger cities like New York, Detroit, and St. Louis.[71] But it did reach other parts of

the country as well, including the State of Arkansas and Fayetteville, too.

An early indication of the possible new outbreak came in mid-January 1920, just before Prohibition began in the country,[72] when some 500 Oklahomans were struck by a "mysterious malady." Doctors suggested that the disease was in fact a "hangover from the influenza epidemic of last year."[73] On January 24, U. S. Surgeon General Rupert Blue said the resurgence was no reason for citizens to panic and that local authorities were capable of handling the new manifestation of the previous year's epidemic.[74]

On January 27, state health officer Dr. C. W. Garrison wrote the new Fayetteville city health officer Dr. C. P. Paddock to advise him that there was "no reason for alarm" but that precautions should be taken to prevent a new occurrence of the influenza.[75] By January 31, however, the spread of the disease locally led the City Board of Health to "shut down all public meetings," including churches, theatres, and schools.[76] At first, they did not use the term quarantine this time, but for all practical purposes that's what it was, and they would the use the term when the "shut down" was later lifted.

In early February, with influenza cases on the rise in Fayetteville proper, the University of Arkansas took measures to keep the disease from reoccurring on campus. While only five flu cases were in the university infirmary by the third day of the month, a "quarantine against dates" was issued and a "practical quarantine" against students congregating in town was maintained. That same day, Dr. Paddock and the City Board of Health notified the public that "all public gatherings, including theatres, churches, public schools," and so forth were prohibited.[77]

Prof. Harrison Hale. Courtesy University of Arkansas Special Collections, 1919 Razorback Yearbook, p. 74.

The next day, the *Arkansas Democrat* reported that University of Arkansas chemistry professor Harrison Hale (who would later write an important history of the school) had been "gassing" students in an attempt to ward off the influenza. Dr. Hale had volunteers breathe small amounts of chlorine gas in daily five-minute sessions for a week.[78] He published the results of his tests later in the spring and concluded that while the "gassing" was not a cure for an already developed case, nor did it "grant future immunity," it nonetheless tended to show that "chlorine does act as a preventive of influenza."[79]

Unlike the October 1918 outbreak, a tally of sorts was kept on local numbers of infected citizens. So, on February 5, the newspaper reported that a total of 129 cases of influenza had been reported in Fayetteville with 24 new cases that day.[80] The next day the *Little Rock Daily News* listed more than 1,002 new cases in the state with 64 of those being in Fayetteville.[81]

Just three days later, the Fayetteville newspaper reported that there

had only been three new cases of influenza in the past three days. Dr. Paddock cautioned against opening town up again too soon. "Last year," he commented, we "lifted the ban too soon…and we had a recurrence of the disease."[82] The *Little Rock Daily News* also reported a decline of the influenza in Arkansas, but it said there had been 14 new cases in Fayetteville.[83]

There were definitely 14 new cases in Fayetteville on Thursday, February 12, and Dr. Paddock confirmed that the "lid would continue on tight" because we were not quite "out of the woods" with the epidemic.[84] Yet, remarkably, the very next day the City Board of Health announced that the "influenza quarantine" would be lifted on Saturday, February 14, at midnight.[85] On Saturday, Dr. Paddock defended the decision saying: "We are told by physicians and we believe that the early quarantine prevented a serious epidemic."[86]

Finally, on Monday, February 16, 1920, with the city's second influenza ban lifted, things slowly went back to normal. Theatres and schools in town reopened and life went on. Thanks to the quick response by local officials and a responsible citizenry, Fayetteville had survived a second round of the great influenza epidemic. Still, even with the quarantine over, remnants of the flu's power were still around. A Fayetteville couple in their 30s both died of influenza at their home in the Rose Hill area of town in late February.[87]

Aftermath. More than 100 years have passed since the 1918 Influenza pandemic. The incorrectly termed "Spanish Flu" ravaged our nation and our world, and when it finally ran its course, it had lasted more than two years in four waves, at last ending in the first half of 1920.

The final numbers are staggering. Deaths are estimated between 30-50 million out of a worldwide population at the time of 1.8 billion, and as many as 675,000 out of a U. S. population of some 103 million.[88] Because it occurred during the last year of World War I, the impact of the influenza on our military is sometimes overlooked. Of some 116,000 deaths suffered by the United States in the war, more than half of those, 63,114, are primarily attributed to the influenza.[89]

Here in Arkansas, with a population of 1.7 million, it is estimated that some 7,000 deaths were due to the influenza.[90] The University of Arkansas lists 12 deaths on campus from the epidemic,[91] and while the number in Fayetteville is speculative, a best guess based on individual newspapers and other reports is that it may have lost twice as many people as the university.[92]

An extraordinary statistic from the 1918 Influenza was its impact on life expectancy here in the United States. In 1917, the life expectancy for men and women was 48 and 54, respectively. For 1918, the deadliest year of the pandemic, those numbers dropped to 36 and 42. By 1919, the numbers had leapt dramatically to 53 and 56.[93]

While a pandemic can strike anyone of any rank, ethnicity, or gender, it does tend to increase the suffering of the marginalized in society. Poor

people and people of color are often the least able to protect themselves from the onslaught of a medical crisis like an influenza epidemic. An epidemic clearly does not pick nor choose who it harms the most, but without doubt its impact is "made substantially worse by poverty"[94] and the lack of access to proper medical care.

As might be expected in this deeply segregated time, there was little commentary about the plight of Fayetteville's Black community, save a reference to several young men, including James C. Hoover, being called to military service.[95] Another of the young men who served, Olli McPherson, died in the Base Hospital at Camp Riley, Kansas (an epicenter of the pandemic), in June 1919, presumably a victim of the virulent influenza.[96]

While we have seen that the COVID-19 epidemic has also strongly affected the poor around the world today, there are other parallels between it and the 1918 Influenza. For example, in those days they were told to keep a five-foot distance from each other; we are told it should be six feet today. They wore masks (though often of flimsy gauze) and so do we. They were told to practice good hygiene, avoid direct contact with those who are sick, and get lots of fresh air and sunshine – all good practices for today as well.[97]

But some things are very different. One of the most obvious is the advancement of medical science – 100 years of progress in the field. The equipment, facilities, and techniques of today far surpass those of the early 20th century. And perhaps most important of all, we have a vaccine, or vaccines, to combat our epidemic. There was no functional vaccine available to fight the 1918 Influenza.[98] Of course one thing did not change over that time: the dedication and devotion of doctors, nurses, volunteers, and other medical staff who, in both pandemics, put themselves at risk and worked tirelessly to care for others.

As of this writing, we are still experiencing a modern-day influenza epidemic. And even though medical science has vastly improved since 1918, with nearly 6,000 deaths in Arkansas and some 600,000 in the United States attributed to COVID-19, the response to the current pandemic might not be viewed as much superior to the one of a century ago.

COVID-19, for various reasons, has lasted as long as the 1918 Influenza and threatens to go on longer. With the help of modern medicine and several effective vaccines, we can only hope that it, too, will soon fade into history just as its predecessor did more than 100 years ago.

Endnotes

[1]The author is particularly indebted to Jennifer Carter who provided dozens of newspaper articles relating to the 1918 pandemic. Thanks also to Melissa Belden Werner for sharing several specific dates and summaries of relevant newspaper articles.

[2]COVID-19 is the abbreviation for Corona Virus Disease 2019.

[3]Laura Spinney, *Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How It Changed the World* (New York: Public Affairs; Hachette Book Group, 2017) p. 63. While the combatant nations of World War I tightly censored the outflow of information, Spain itself was neutral in the war and was thus able to

report on the 1918 Influenza. The consensus among commentators is that this is why the 1918 Influenza became known as the Spanish Flu, even though the disease did not originate in Spain.
[4]Catharine Arnold, *Pandemic 1918* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018), pp. 39ff. Other locations suggested for the 1918 Influenza's origin include France and China.
[5]Dr. Jeremy Brown, *Influenza: The Hundred-Year Hunt to Cure the Deadliest Disease in History* (New York: Touchstone, Imprint of Simon & Shuster, 2018), p. 43.
[6]Camp Funston, built as a basic training installation, still exists today. It is located a few miles from Fort Riley near the town of Ogden, Kansas.
[7]Some commentators suggest the date was Monday, May 4, 1918, rather than Monday, May 11, 1918, but most have settled on the latter date.
[8]Spinney, *Pale Rider*, p. 37
[9]Arnold, *Pandemic*, pp. 38-39.
[10]John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza* (New York: Viking, 2004) , p.169.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Jeffery K. Taubenberger and David M. Morens, "1918 Influenza: The Mother of All Pandemics," internet article, accessed July 21, 2020 at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc.
[13]"Spanish flu," Wikipedia entry, accessed July 21, 2020 at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_flu.
[14]Ibid.
[15]*Fayetteville Democrat* (Daily), June 24, 1918, p. 1. Shelton died in France on May 28, 1918, but it took almost a month for his death to be recorded in the newspaper. The American Legion post in Fayetteville is named in his honor.
[16]While it did not directly affect Fayetteville, the influenza continued to ravage the military. At Camp Pike (now Camp Robinson) just north of Little Rock, the second wave was devastating. By early October 1918, soldiers were becoming ill in camp at a "rate of 1,000 per twenty-four hours." Eventually, 6,364 men (out of some 52,000 stationed there) caught the flu and 79 died. Kim Allen Scott, "Plague on the Homefront: Arkansas and the Great Influenza Epidemic of 1918," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 47, No. 4 (Winter, 1988), pp. 329, 332.
[17]*Fayetteville Democrat* (Daily), June 15, 1918, p. 1.
[18]Ibid., July 27, 1918, p. 1.
[19]Benjamin F. Shearer, "An Experiment in Military and Civilian Education: The Students' Army Training Corps at the University of Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1908-1984) 72, No. 3 (August, 1979), p. 213.
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[39]Ibid., October 12, 1918, p.1.
[40]Ibid., October 14, 1918, p. 1.
[41]Ibid., October 15, 1918, p. 1.
[42]Ibid., October 16, 1918, p. 1.
[43]Ibid., October 17, 1918, p. 1.
[44]Ibid., October 18, 1918, pp. 1, 4.
[45]Ibid., October 19, 1918, p. 1.
[46]Ibid., p. 4.
[47]Ibid., October 21, 1918, p. 1.
[48]Ibid., October 22, 1918, p. 1.
[49]Ibid., October 23, 1918, p. 1.
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[51]Ibid., October 26, 1918, p. 1.
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A New Life in the Making For East Mountain Cemetery

Final resting place for Washington County's enslaved

By David Edmark

Long in service and little known to the public is East Mountain Cemetery in Fayetteville, a burial ground a bit larger than an acre at the foot of East Rock Street. It holds its deceased along with separate family plots for the Walker and Sutton families, a fraction of an acre set off by a wrought-iron fence and contained within East Mountain's grounds.

What's distinctive about these adjoining grounds is that the combined site of East Mountain and the Walker-Sutton grounds is the resting place for more than 100 people since Fayetteville's early days before the Civil War. The Black people buried there were most likely enslaved by members of the families buried in the smaller plot and other local slaveholding families, or relatives of those enslaved people.

The larger matter of African-American burial sites in general has become an area of study not only for historians but also for landscape architects. A studio project in the fall semester of 2020 at the University of Arkansas Department of Landscape Architecture focused on East Mountain Cemetery with a broader perspective on similar cemeteries nationwide.

Sharon Killian, president of the Northwest Arkansas African-American Heritage Association, brought the project to the university, which agreed that it would be an exciting and relevant project to pursue. What began as a project to address erosion at the cemetery and to find ways to transcend its history and make it a place of celebration became the largest class in the landscape architecture department's history, she said.

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Broken grave markers at East Mountain Cemetery, 2021. Photograph by David Edmark.

The cemetery's juxtaposition of slaves and slaveholders reflects the social and economic reality of 19th century Washington County and a prominent pioneer family's role in it.

The patriarch of the Walker family was David Walker, who came to Arkansas from Kentucky in 1830 and settled in Fayetteville when it had no more than a dozen families. He became a lawyer, judge, and political figure in the region. He also acquired property, owned a 1,000-acre farm on the West Fork of the White River, and was among the region's largest slaveowners with at least 23 slaves at one time.[1]

Washington County had a substantial number of slaves in numbers and as a percentage of the population. In 1840, 883 of its 7,148 residents were enslaved, or about 12 percent. In 1850 total slave population was up to 1,199 out of 9,970 residents, still about 12 percent. By 1860 the number had increased to 1,493 slaves among 14,673 residents, or about 10 percent.[2]

About two decades into his residency in the county, Walker held 19 slaves, according to the 1850 census. Only four other county residents owned 20 or more slaves that year; he was the county's fifth largest slaveholder and its wealthiest resident. The 1860 census shows he had 23 slaves and five slave cabins. He had resigned from his position as an Arkansas Supreme Court justice in 1855, so he no longer needed to spend considerable time in Little Rock. In a letter the following year, he wrote of his current attention to farm duties with "no briefs, no books, no voluminous records to dream over."[3]

Walker's status as a slaveholder began soon after his arrival in Fayetteville as a newly married landowner. Recollecting his early days in the region, he described life at the cabin he built in 1833.

"You can readily see how humble our beginning in life was," Walker wrote. "By degrees, and as my means would justify, I improved our condi-

tion. I bought a negro girl and had only had her a short time until I went security for one Samuel D. Lowell, who was in prison for debt. Lowell ran off, and I had the debt to pay, $700. This girl was all the property I had and I had to sell her to pay the debt. We hired a woman for a few months and then bought another negro woman."[4]

Walker continued to own slaves until into the Civil War. He initially opposed Arkansas seceding from the Union, but was elected to the state secession convention in 1861, became its president, and ultimately supported its decision to join the Confederacy. During the war he was a colonel in a Confederate military court.[5]

Walker's role as a slaveholder and public official placed him among the county's elite population. Washington County's slaveholders in 1850 made up 2.9 percent of the population and owned more than half the county's farm value. Upon the arrival of more nonslaveholders by 1860, the slaveholders' share of the farm value was down to 38 percent although their production increased.[6] More than half the county's officials were slaveholders as were many of the representatives to state government.[7] Ted J. Smith in his 1995 study of slavery in Washington County said of the slaveholders:

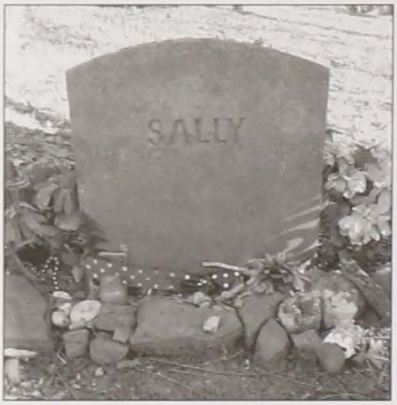
> *Those that had arrived early purchased the best land and set the economic foundation for their control of the county's agricultural and manufacturing production. Their rich farms outproduced all others, in fact so much so, that the upland county's distribution of wealth was more unequal than the cotton counties in the opposite corner of the state. Little of this would have been possible without the work of their slaves.*[8]

With that backdrop, the Walkers established the cemetery in which its family members, slaves, and others would be buried.

Today, East Mountain Cemetery is owned and maintained by the Northwest Arkansas African-American Heritage Association, which obtained it in 2014 when the Wade family deeded it to the organization. The Walker-Sutton plot is owned by the Southern Memorial Association, which also owns Confederate Cemetery across the road.[9] The combined site was originally owned by the Walkers, with the first documented gravesite established in 1838 with the burial of David Walker's father, Jacob Wythe Walker.

"The land was part of the David Walker properties and he and his cohorts – like the Suttons, Quarles, Polsons, Wilsons, et al – had family plots on the East Mountain Cemetery site," said Killian. "It is likely that enslaved people other than those belonging to David Walker, whose slave quarters were located on what became the Confederate Cemetery, are also buried on the periphery of the main plots and on the eastern part of the land."[10]

Over the next several decades after Jacob Walker's burial, Black people who either were enslaved at the time of their death or were formerly enslaved were buried at the site. The Northwest Arkansas African-American



Two graves in the East Mountain Cemetery marking the resting places of Sally, believed to be an enslaved woman in pre-Civil War Fayetteville, and Canzada Sutton, a Black woman who died in 1922. Photographs by David Edmark and Find a Grave at https://www.findagrave.com

Heritage Association and the Arkansas Archeological Survey determined there have been 118 burials on the combined site since 1838. East Mountain Cemetery's last burial was in 1961, according to Killian.

"All the Black people buried there would likely have been buried before the end of the Civil War, except only two burials, maybe three," Killian said.

Some definitive information is known about at least two Black people who were buried there decades after the Civil War: Canzada Sutton, who died in 1922, and Josh Thompson, who died in 1917.

Sutton's gravestone has a reversed S in the words "Sutton" and "Rest." She was apparently born as early as 1864 or as late as 1871. The 1880 census listed her as being a 16-year-old servant, which would place her birth at 1864.[11] The 1920 census reported her birth year as 1871.[12] Her mother was most likely enslaved either at the time of Sutton's birth or a few years before her birth. Sutton's gravestone in the cemetery indicates that she died November 22, 1922.[13]

Thompson's birthdate in the 1910 census records was listed as 1861, meaning he was probably born into slavery.[14] He died October 22, 1917.[15] Killian said Thompson's death certificate listed him as being born in 1875, but she leans toward the 1861 birthdate as the real one because Thompson and his wife were literate. They would have understood what was being recorded on the census form, Killian explained. "As more facts are learned, this information will be updated or confirmed," she said.

A third potential post-Civil War burial is at a grave with a marker that simply says, "Sally."

It's believed this might be the resting place of a woman who was enslaved by the Walker family. One clue that lends weight to that theory is that Killian's searches have not yielded any indication of a white woman

by that name in historical material pertaining to the cemetery.

"Everything so far – lone headers without last names, no birth or death date – leads to an enslaved person where those details are usually unknown of others," Killian said. "The headstone and footstone seem made of mortar, not a natural stone. They have been well kept and tended with flowers by persons unknown to me for years."

A compilation of slaves and their owners in the county archives shows Lodawick Brodie sold a 45-year-old woman named Sally to Walker on March 23, 1843.[16]

The customs of the times leave records sketchy for those researching the story of Black people in that era. This makes it difficult to find specific details to confirm theories about the former slaves buried at East Mountain Cemetery.

"Generally, we were noted in census by number, not name, sometimes whether the mother or woman in her lineage was bred by a white man (mulatto)," Killian said.

(The term "mulatto" was a category in census forms from 1850 to 1920. According to a recent analysis by demographers, "The instructions and category descriptions provided to census enumerators during this period defined the difference among white, black, and mulatto Americans as a matter of descent, or 'blood,' divisible into fractions: one-half for each parent, one-quarter for each grandparent, and so on. In 1870 and 1880 [and similarly in 1910 and 1920], mulatto was defined as a 'generic' mixed-race category that included '... all persons having any perceptible trace of African blood.'"[17])

To aid in this search, the organization is seeking funding and resources to find the writings and account books of local residents who held slaves. Killian noted that the Washington County archives has compiled a list of enslaved people who are listed by name by the slave owners who deeded them from one to the other as inherited wealth within families or as valuable commodity to settle deeds or debts.

The university's involvement in the cemetery "will fully engage students in a landscape, history, and current culture that is often concealed, while giving them an ability to work closely with stakeholders to transform the site for a more hopeful and happy future," said Jim Coffman, a visiting assistant professor in the UofA landscape architecture department who taught the studio assignment as part of the cemetery recovery project.[18]

Killian plans for the heritage group to make appropriate repairs to damaged stones and to recover identifiable sandstone headstones that were installed as markers for enslaved people.

(*The author gratefully acknowledges research materials and guidance provided by Lisa C. Childs.*)

Endnotes

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Civil War Swords on Display at Headquarters House

Weapons owned by Colonel Erasmus "Ras" Stirman

By Jim Spillars

The sword has been in existence for more than 5,000 years.[1] Originally, it was a weapon for both offensive and defensive action against an opponent; however, that use would change over the centuries as the way people waged conflict changed. By the middle 1800s, the purpose of the sword had largely changed to become a tool for giving large visual orders or an accoutrement of rank – in other words, it was a status symbol.

The Washington County Historical Society displays three swords in the Headquarters House Museum belonging to Fayetteville native and Civil War soldier, Colonel Erasmus "Ras" Stirman.

Ras Stirman grew up in a well-to-do Fayetteville family and was 21 years old when Arkansas seceded from the Union (May 6, 1861). He enlisted in the Pike Guards as a private. The Pike Guards began as an Arkansas militia unit, and they were transferred into Confederate service under General Benjamin McCulloch. His unit would see action in Southwest Missouri with a few skirmishes prior to the Battle of Wilson's Creek in August of 1861. Wilson's Creek would be the first large battle

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in which Ras Stirman was involved. Following this fight, he was promoted to lieutenant. He would see action at Pea Ridge before his unit was sent to fight in Tennessee at Shiloh and Mississippi at Corinth and Vicksburg. Eventually, Ras Stirman would return to Arkansas as a colonel and fight in the Red River Campaign, finishing his service in his home state. After the war, he returned to Fayetteville where he served as mayor from 1869 to 1871. Later he moved to the Denver, Colorado, area where he remained for the rest of his life.[2]

The Stirman sword collection would find its way to the Washington County Historical Society in April 2005 when Stirman's great grandson, William Lavoie, made a permanent loan of the swords on behalf of the Stirman descendants.[3] The three swords include a Horstmann[4] and Sons foot officer's sword, an Ames foot officer's sword, and an Ames artillery saber.

The Horstmann and Sons sword certainly has the most wear and possibly the most exceptional story. William H. Horstmann came to the United States from Germany in 1815 and established a company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that started producing civilian items, but soon added a military line. At first, only sword belts were a product offering, but soon the entire sword was offered with the hilts being manufactured in Philadelphia and the blades imported from the ancient sword center of Solingen, Germany. The United States government had contracts to purchase swords from the Horstmann company.[5]

The Stirman sword manufactured by Horstmann is the most obviously used of the three in the col-

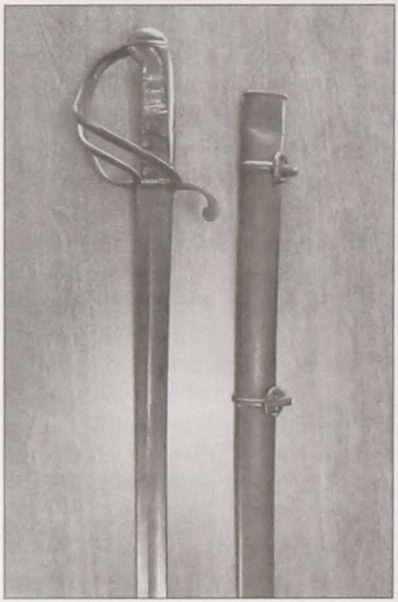
Above, top: The three swords shown here are, from left, the Horstmann and Sons foot officer's sword, the Ames foot officer's sword, and the Ames artillery saber.
Below: This is a closer view of the swords' handles. At the top is the Horstmann and Sons foot officer's sword, showing its heavy usage with the wire wrap unraveling. Below are the Ames foot officer's sword and the Ames artillery saber.
Both photographs by Jim Spillars.

A close-up view of the hilt of the Horstmann and Sons sword. The Eagle and Federal Shield can be seen framed by eight flags in the background. Photograph by Jim Spillars.

lection. The hilt is the traditional Eagle with the Federal Shield and eight flags in the background.

It shows signs of having originally been gold plated, but the plating has worn almost completely off. The handle would have originally been wrapped in a skin such as shark or eel, but that is also worn off. The only remaining parts of the original scabbard are parts of the wooden sides and the metal throat piece and the center hook ring. The blade has proof marks consistent with being a foreign made blade. Since neither the Confederate government nor the State of Arkansas purchased swords from the Horstmann company, the question is how Ras Stirman acquired this foot officer's sword. In a surviving letter to his sister – who was still living in Fayetteville – dated August 4, 1861, Stirman writes of a skirmish in Missouri where his men defeated a group of "Dutch" (German immigrants fighting for the Federal army under the command of Franz Sigel) and took their "sabers and pistols."[6] This is the only mention in his many letters to her about him or his fellow soldiers taking Federal weapons. These letters are preserved by the University of Arkansas in Mullins Library's Special Collections. [Copies of the Stirman letters are also available from the Washington County Historical Society in the book *In Fine Spirits* by Pat Carr.] It is plausible that he came into possession of this sword at that time.

The other two swords in the collection are both made by the Ames Company of Chicopee, Massachusetts. The Ames company would provide swords for the United States military from 1829 until 1907. The Ames foot officer's sword is of a very similar design to the Horstmann sword. The handle is gold-plated and retains the original skin wrap and gold-filled wire wrap. The blade is etched with U.S. prominently in the center, and the company name and city are included in the etching. The original shark skin scabbard is intact and also on display. This sword is



Shown here are the hilt and scabbard of the 1821 British cavalry saber belonging to Sergeant Benjamin F. Ramey of the First Arkansas Union Cavalry. Photo by Jim Spillars.

an excellent example of the quality of work that the Ames foundry was turning out during the war.

The third sword is an artillery saber. It has the traditional curve of the artillery saber and is a non-commissioned officer's sword. This sword has a brass hilt with leather wrap on the handle and original brass wire. There is no decoration on the blade, only the markings identifying it as an Ames, Cabotsville, U.S. It is dated 1846 and bears the inspector initials of NWP. This stamp indicates that the sword was inspected by Nahum W. Patch who inspected swords and other military items from 1831 until 1851 for the United States government.[7] It is very possible that this sword was used during the Mexican War and returned to an arsenal in the South where it would have been confiscated and reissued during the Civil War. This is the only blade of the three that is actually sharpened. Artillery sabers would carry a sharp edge because they would be used for cleaning brush for cannon placement or to cut horses out of harnesses of cannon limber vehicles if necessary. The metal scabbard is also original and complete and on display with the sword.

All three swords, along with Ras Stirman's Southern Cross and Little Rock Reunion badge and ribbon from 1911, are on permanent display at the Headquarters House Museum. In addition there are other Civil War artifacts from the area including items from the Battle of Prairie Grove.

A fourth sword of importance to the Washington County Historical Society is the sword of Sergeant Benjamin F. Ramey, Company B of the First Arkansas Union Cavalry. Sergeant Ramey was a resident of the eastern part of Washington County and lived in what is now the Elkins area. He served with the First Arkansas and was headquartered at the Fayetteville Garrison.[8] This cavalry encampment would have been in the area of the Headquarters House Museum. The Ramey sword must have an interesting story. It is identified as an 1821 British cavalry sword and unlike the American cavalry saber, it has a straight blade. This is known as a design for thrusting, not slicing and was very commonly used in the War of Texas Independence and the Mexican War. This blade is said to have inspired the 1833 Dragoon saber design.[9] It is completely possible

that, since the United States government purchased swords made in Europe, this sword could have been used in earlier conflicts, then stored in an arsenal, only to be reissued to "Mountain Feds" in Northwest Arkansas.

The Ramey sword is not on permanent display and is still with the family of Jerri Reed Foster, who is a direct descendant of Sergeant Ramey and a member of the Washington County Historical Society. This sword along with Sergeant Ramey's lamp and copies of orders that he received directly from Colonel M. LaRue Harrison and Colonel Albert Bishop will be on display at the Battle of Fayetteville Commemoration which is planned for the grounds of the Headquarters House Museum on April 16, 2022.

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[6]Pat M. Carr, *In Fine Spirits, The Civil War Letters of Ras Striman with Historical Comments* (Washington County Historical Society, Fayetteville, AR, 1986), p. 15.

[7]"M1840 Saber-Ames dated 1845-ACW & Mexican War 1 of 600 sabers manufactured in 1845" last modified January 22, 2011, accessed June 5, 2021, http://www.swordforum.com/vb4/showthread.php, D Mills.

[8] Jerri Reed Foster (descendant, Sergeant Benjamin F. Ramey), in discussion with the author, April, 2021.

[9]Barry L. Lynduff (Living Historian, Civil War scholar), in discussion with the author, March, 2021.

Washington County Historical Society

announces

The 13th Annual Competition for Articles on History of Washington County

The Washington County Historical Society announces the 13th annual competition for two awards for articles about the history of Washington County. Each award carries an honorarium of $250. The two categories of awards are:

* The Walter J. Lemke Prize for best article on Washington County history, with preference given to subjects outside Fayetteville;
* The Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize for best article on Washington County history, with a focus on Fayetteville.

Topics can address any aspect of county history, including archeology, lives of individuals, architecture, arts and crafts, or records of institutions, and can be set in any time period. All historians – both professional and amateur – are invited to submit articles. Winners will be recognized at the society's annual meeting in October.

Deadline for submissions is June 30, 2022.

Judging is based on contributions to the expansion of the county's history; originality of the subject; and use of primary and secondary sources. Articles must be original material, and not previously published.

Submissions must be typed, and preferably include endnotes. Length – not including endnotes – can range from a minimum of 4,000 words up to a maximum of 40 pages. The title page should be headed: "WCHS Prize," followed by the manuscript full title, and the author's name, mailing address, telephone number, and email.

Entries become the property of the Washington County Historical Society and will not be returned. All submissions will be considered for publication in the WCHS journal *Flashback*. WCHS reserves the right to award one or no prizes. Back issues of *Flashback* are available at the Fayetteville Public Library.

Submit manuscripts by June 30, 2022, by mail or email:

* By mail: Patsy Watkins, WCHS Prize, Washington County Historical Society, 118 E. Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701.
* Email: Patsy Watkins at pwatkins@uark.edu

For questions, contact Watkins at pwatkins@uark.edu.

"Following the Crop"

The Springdale Migrant Farm Workers Camp 1942-1968

By Marie Demeroukas and Patsy G. Watkins

During the Great Depression, the federal government began building migrant labor camps to accommodate the host of itinerant Americans who had lost their homes and their livelihood and taken to the road looking for work. Millions of people were living out of their cars, in tents, or off the backs of trucks parked in fields and ditches.

We're familiar with this story thanks to John Steinbeck's popular 1939 novel (and subsequent movie) *The Grapes of Wrath*.[1] The Tom Joad family loses their Sallisaw, Oklahoma, farm and heads to California seeking work; they wind up in a migrant labor camp called Weedpatch, which happens to be one of the very first facilities built by the federal government.

We reasonably associate these camps with California as most were located in the West, primarily in that state. Therefore, it may come as a surprise that the feds built a migrant labor camp in Springdale, Arkansas. Like other such camps, it was intended to provide shelter for transient laborers and their families, thousands of whom came to Northwest Arkansas in the 1930s and '40s to work the harvests. In fact, in the late 1930s, from 1,000 to 14,000 workers were needed to bring in the crops of fruits and vegetables while they were at their peak.[2]

This article tells the story of that camp, the Springdale Farm Workers

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Marie Demeroukas recently retired as photo archivist and research librarian at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History in Springdale.
Patsy G. Watkins is editor of Flashback *and former UofA journalism faculty member. She is the author of* All Done Gone: Arkansas Photographs from the Farm Security Administration Collection, 1935-1943.

Aerial view of the Springdale Farm Workers Center in southeast Springdale, 1944. Workers' cabins flank administrative and services buildings. Photograph by Harold Clark. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History Caroline Price Clark Collection (S-2002-72-348)

Center, which operated from 1942 to 1968, why and how it came to be, and what life in the camp was like. The story is told through a collaboration between *Flashback* and the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History and its online exhibit "Following the Crop" by Marie Demeroukas, available at https://shilohmuseum.org/project/following-the-crop/.

In the 1930s and '40s, migrant laborers were a necessity for the agricultural economy in Washington County, but their descending on the area every spring also created a confounding problem: where to house this temporary influx of workers, many of whom had families in tow. They constituted, quite literally, a mobile community with the needs of any small-town population for shelter, sanitation, food, health care, education, and recreation. But cities the size of Springdale simply didn't have the means to handle the situation; nor could state government offer much help.

Thus, the federal government had to step in. Though President Franklin Roosevelt had established a massive farm assistance program in the mid-1930s, initially there had been no provision to address the migrant labor issue. However, by 1937, the federal government knew it had a migrant crisis on its hands and had started building agricultural labor camps in California to accommodate the westward surge of homeless workers. Weedpatch, located southeast of Bakersfield, California, was one of those. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the Joads find their way to the Weedpatch Camp late at night, where, road-weary and a little scared, they are offered safety in the fenced compound, a place to bed down, and the promise of running water and a shower in the morning.[3]

The scale of California's migrant labor problem was clearly greater than that in Washington County, but the issues in Arkansas were similar and no less perplexing. In the early weeks of 1941, members of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce concluded that the local migrant labor situation had become serious and contacted the federal government to ask for help. In a memo to the Farm Security Administration (FSA), the Springdale businessmen argued there were "serious health and housing problems in that section of Northwest Arkansas because of the large number of transients during the fruit and berry harvests and when ship-

ments of vegetables are at their peak."[4] The situation was described as "dire."[5] The government quickly responded with a promise of help.[6]

It was a problem born of success. The rich harvests had contributed to Springdale's growth as a regional canning center which was built on the agricultural development of the late 19th century. The coming of the railroads in the 1880s in the area not only promoted settlement, but then opened new markets for agriculture and the canning industry as well. By 1939-40, production from the local canning industry had brought millions of dollars into the area.[7] The complication was that the fruit and berry crops were "quick-harvest," meaning they must be picked quickly or lost. This kind of work depended on hiring large numbers of temporary workers, far more than the local labor supply could provide. Area growers had taken to advertising nationally for help; in response, every spring migrant laborers flooded into Northwest Arkansas from 20 to 30 states.[8]

Housing, school facilities, and the public health risk of poor sanitation became the critical issues for Springdale. As *The Springdale News* reported, "Forty percent of the migrant families have housing, the remainder stay in barns, poultry houses, tents, makeshift cabins, and many others have no shelter at all."[9] Though single men were among the migrant laborers, more workers brought families with them. If both husbands and wives worked in the fields, then younger children needed care and older ones needed education. Everyone needed medical care.

Marguerite Gilstrap, a local journalist in the 1930s, recalled in a 1981 article the conditions for migrants before the camp was built:

> *I didn't have to go to eastern Arkansas to see what poverty was doing to rural families and observe the misery. We could see it right here in Washington County when the migrant workers came through during berry and fruit season. There were thousands of them just as desperately hungry, ill, and mistreated as the sharecroppers....*[10]

In March 1941, the FSA announced that funds had been approved for a migrant labor camp in Springdale, thanks in part to the assistance of U.S. Representative Clyde T. Ellis (Arkansas 3rd District).[11] Initially, $80,000 was allocated for "a 200-unit agricultural labor camp that would provide housing and sanitary living quarters for as many as 1,000 grant agricultural workers." According to the FSA, there were between 75 and 100 such camps near large population centers; the Springdale camp would be the first located in the Ozarks or middle west.[12]

The camp was to be built on a 40-acre plot. Demeroukas writes that it was...

> *'[A]t the south end of Park and Dodson avenues just inside the city limits ...bounded on the north by Caudle avenue, by the city limits on the south and by Powell avenue on the west.' It would measure 600 by 1,275 feet and be enclosed by a fence five feet high with three strands of barbed wire on the top and two gates. Facilities would include a community nursery, utility building with laundry and showers, office, shop, clinic, comfort stations, water and garbage*

units, manager's garage, grease rack, and flagpole. Each of the 200 housing units would be 14 feet square and accommodate a five-person family; houses would have clapboard siding with canvas tops and screens and be constructed so that they could be disassembled for storage when not in use. Camp residents would be required to pay a small fee but could work it off if they were unable to pay. 'Cabins could be rented for 10 cents a day or up to $25.00 a week, if the unit had electricity and a small kerosene stove.'[13]

Work on the camp began in summer 1941, and the Springdale Farm Workers Center was dedicated a year later on Saturday, April 25, 1942, at a total cost of $100,000. Two days later it opened to receive its first occupants. J. Carl Jones was the camp manager. In addressing the 300 people attending the dedication, A.D. Stewart, regional FSA director, stated that the camp would do more than simply provide shelter. It would offer a spiritual resurrection for those in need:[14]

Its value is as all material values – to reestablish, to recreate the one great value...human value. It has been found that the man who has had the advantages such as this camp is intended to give, is 25% more efficient than the man who has not. It is to improve the idealism of a group of people who are having a struggle and have been struggling for generations.[15]

He lauded the humanitarian spirit of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce members in their vision of bettering the lives of farm workers, in seeking to rescue and replenish their physical needs and personal dignity through a camp that would provide a clean, secure living space for them and their families.[16]

Eight months later at the end of the 1941 growing season, *The Springdale News* reported that Springdale could "look back on the most prosperous 12-month period in its 102-year history....[A] golden year for growers," with farm products bringing in more than $21 million. The brand-new Farm Workers Center was credited for its contribution by helping to relieve the labor shortage.[17] The following year, the camp registered 1,302 people in 328 different groups or families, with 408 people as its largest population at any one time.[18]

Government Migrant Camps. Migrant farm labor was not a part of President Roosevelt's first New Deal agriculture relief programs in the early 1930s; however, by mid-decade the federal government had to face the problem. A 1936 agency report noted the "wandering army of agricultural workers,"[19] and a 1938 document described under the heading "Unsolved Problems," the "many thousands of seasonal agricultural workers" that "for years have presented serious economic and social problems."[20] In 1939, the FSA estimated there were 200,000 to 350,000 migrant families in the United States, which meant there were more than million people perpetually on the road.[21]

The first FSA migrant labor camps were built in California in 1937. By the time the Springdale camp was established, there was a basic plan for the more than 50 such facilities in California, Texas, Florida, and eight

other states.[22] In 1939 the FSA formally added building migrant camps to its other massive farm assistance programs, noting that "the need for such camps has increased rapidly and the camp program expanded to meet it."[23]

Migrants' wages were low – sometimes 25 cents an hour – and if they couldn't afford the minimal charge of perhaps a dollar a week to stay in a camp, they could work it off with chores – a requirement in the Springdale camp. Annual incomes could be as low as $125, but many families made considerably less or even nothing at all.[24] No wonder the camps with their offer of shelter, clean water, medical care, and even schools could represent a welcome refuge for migrants. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, when Tom Joad learns about all the services available in the California camp, he bursts out, "Well, for Christ's sake! Why ain't they more places like this?"[25]

There was also the issue of physical safety. In many areas, migrants faced not just discrimination and distrust, as outsiders often do, but outright violence. Some of the major large growers viewed the FSA as a "meddlesome liberal agency and worried that the camps would provide havens for union organizers."[26] Steinbeck in one brief chapter sorts out the reasons behind locals' fear and hostility toward migrants – the suspicions conjured up by the migrants' poverty that they were dirty, degenerate, disease-ridden, and desperate:

> *The local people whipped themselves into a mold of cruelty. Then they formed units, squads, and armed them – armed them with clubs, with gas, with guns. We own the country. We can't let these Okies get out of hand.*[27]

The federal government was aware of these conflicts but focused first on migrants' living conditions. Mercer Evans, the FSA director of Personnel and Labor Relations Division, told a group of social workers in 1939 that the migrant program's primary aim was "the personal and social rehabilitation of the migratory families....[It was] intended to provide social recognition to [them], to give them a place in community life, to reestablish social contact" – as well as housing and medical care. Mercer admitted the camps weren't perhaps ideal, but, given "the limited authorities granted us," they were the only solution to the massive problem facing the FSA.[28]

Life in the Springdale Farm Workers Center. Before the federal migrant camp was built, Dr. Jesse Laurence Charlton, a University of Arkansas rural sociologist with an expertise in migrant labor conditions, photographed migrant workers around Springdale, showing families in their living and working conditions. Two of Charlton's photographs, available on the Shiloh Museum's website [See "Photo Gallery" at https://shilohmuseum.org/project/following-the-crop/], show pickers in humble "farm shelters" and camped out under trees. Dr. Charlton, called to testify before a U.S. Congressional Committee in 1940 "about the unique hardships this group faced,"[29] said that,

> *Employers prefer an oversupply of laborers for strawberry picking that makes it possible to hold the pay rate at two cents per quart and to pick over the fields after the morning dew and in time for transporting the berries for*

Two photographs of strawberry pickers near Springdale, about 1939. Both photos are by Dr. Jesse Laurence Charlton. Pickers in the top photo are Native American, probably Cherokee. Both photos are courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Dr. J. Laurence Charlton Collection (top photo: S-86-15-71; bottom photo: S-86-15-41)

shipment in the early afternoon. This oversupply during the 1939 harvest reduced the earning power of the individual laborer to approximately 60 cents per day of some employment.[30]

On the Shiloh Museum's website Demeroukas draws a concise picture of the migrants' life in the Springdale camp. Her narrative echoes much found in the government reports about camps:

At dawn farmers picked up their workers – from young children to elderly grandparents – and delivered them to the fields or packing sheds where they labored long, hot hours. Early afternoon saw the workers back at camp, cooking, cleaning, and resting.

Their cabins were tiny. Some were without gas or electricity; none had plumbing so water was fetched from pumps. Toilet, bathing, and laundry facilities were centralized and shared by many.

Following the crop took its toll on laborers and their families. Because they were constantly on the move, children missed school and fell behind in their grade levels. Field work didn't pay much. Many families scraped by, relying on donations of food, clothing, and medical care. Health problems for some folks came about because they didn't realize the importance of, or have access to, good nutrition and cleanliness.

Most people were glad to see the laborers return each year. Farmers needed their crops harvested. Merchants had goods and services for sale. Churches wanted to minister to the needy. However, as welcome as the laborers were, there often was an economic, class, and educational gulf between them and the local community.

Many of the migrant workers of the Great Depression were farm families, regular folks like Steinbeck's Joads, who had lost their land to droughts, the costs of increasing agricultural mechanization, and the drop in crop prices. In California which drew 2.5 million people in the 1930s, migrants were 95 percent white, with most in their 20s or early 30s. As has

been noted, though there were plenty of single men among them, those from the Dust Bowl migration had a "preponderance of families."[31] In the Springdale camp 75 percent of migrants were from Arkansas and the region and all were white. *The Springdale News* reported, "There are no Mexicans or Negroes and these types of workers are not encouraged to come here."[32]

Cabins near one of four toilet facilities in the camp, 1945. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History Ray Tripp Collection (S-2004-35-1)

Jeff Moser, who grew up on a farm in Cave Springs during the 1940s and 1950s, recalled, "The migrants were just like us, just hard-working people that got in the field about 5 a.m. and worked hard till about 1 p.m. ...[They] would generally pick a few roasting ears from the corn to take home with them; Dad never said anything to them...as we had plenty."[33] Yet, as Demeroukas noted, economic and class distinctions created barriers and set them apart from the local community.

With so many families and children, issues of childcare and education were paramount in the migrant camps. Migrant parents were concerned for their children. As one study at the time reported, "Being on the road wasn't a 'proper mode of existence' for raising children, and parents worried: 'They'll be just nomads, not caring for anything except their eats – no home life church or school. All this is enough to worry me to death,' a mother explained."[34]

Billie Jines, a columnist for *The Springdale News*, wrote about the ordeal for children: "If you have ever seen migrant farm workers in the field in the past, you are certain to have noticed one thing: how hot, tired, neglected babies and small children have struggled out the weary day while their mothers assisted in the harvest of strawberries or beans."[35]

It was a struggle for older children, too, those who of necessity had to work in the fields. Glenda Emery Wright, who was 13 years old when she lived in the Springdale camp in 1946, recalled in an interview with Demeroukas in 2008:

> *We picked green beans, tomatoes, strawberries...it was hard...I got too hot sometimes....There was times it was really good, we'd come home from picking beans and go get some ice cream [on Emma Avenue]. [The camp was]...okay. We were satisfied that we had food to eat and a roof over our heads....It was an adventure for us kids.*[36]

But a 17-year-old Texan quoted in a *Springdale News* story, said, "The

Omer Bynum family, residents in the Springdale camp, August 1957. Front, from left: Dale Bynum, Lonnie Bynum, Beverly Bynum, Helen Bynum, Nina Faye Bynum Walton, Rhonda Walton, Mickey Bynum (shirtless), Frances Lee Bynum, and Larry Bynum (open shirt). Against wall, from left: Homer Walton, Omer Bynum, and Sammy Bynum. Photograph by Howard Clark. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History Caroline Price Clark Collection (S-2002-72-953).

place has a fence around it and they turn out the lights at 9 p.m.; this makes me feel like a prisoner."[37] Fences, of course, were also intended to provide security and protection for migrant families.

The apprehension about the effect on children of living as migrants was echoed in civic and religious organizations. Cassandra Stockburger, the state director of the Division of Home Missions at the National Council of Churches in 1957, said,

> *As volunteers rock babies in the nursery or play with older children, the question each one asks is – What will become of this child? Must he, too, be a migrant? If so, must he live under these same unsanitary, crowded conditions and face the same insecurities and the same isolation from school, church and community?*[38]

Ruth Ann Snipes, a *Springdale News* journalist, wrote about a teacher who overheard "one child telling that her mother had sold her wedding rings to buy medicine for their baby. She also said children telling of one of their parents leaving home was not unusual."[39]

In addition, Stockburger also raised the issue of nutrition for children in the camps:

> *There never is much time for food for breakfast: a piece of bacon and white gravy poured over heavy skillet-fried biscuits or pieces of loaf bread....Babies are fed hurriedly from the mother's plate and then, if lucky, are given a bottle of canned milk to drink on the way to the field where big sister, age three or four, will mind them at the edge of the field....*[40]

Local and regional groups helped meet the needs of the migrant laborers in Springdale. Demeroukas' list includes the Springdale Chamber of Commerce, the non-denominational Home Missions Council of North America, the Home Mission Service of the Baptist Church, the United Church Women of Springdale, the Voluntary Service Team of the Mennonite Central Committee, the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Washington County Health Department, and the Northwest Arkansas Area Migrant Committee.

Demeroukas:

> *Volunteers and paid staff provided health care, nursery programs, educa-*

tion, recreation, relief, and religious services. There were adult literacy classes, Sunday School, and educational classes for children. A mothers' club allowed women to socialize and make handicrafts such as rag dolls. Area dentists treated patients and taught proper tooth care. Doctors and public health nurses gave immunization shots and treated illnesses.

There were efforts to enrich children's lives. They took field trips to the library, the fire department, and the swimming pool. They played board games, horseshoes, and volleyball and learned skills like sewing and woodworking. A teenage club was set up in one cabin while a church operated a clothing supply center in another. A young labor camp volunteer said, 'We usually try to spend about three evenings each week in the camp playing baseball, drawing, painting, square dancing, and other children's activities.' [41]

The nursery school featured child-sized furniture, drinking fountains, and toilets. Plenty of nutritious food and nap times were offered to help the children gain weight and lose chronic colds.

The response of one young migrant girl learning to sew a blouse and skirt was poignant: "Oh goody, we have something somebody didn't give us!"[42]

Mike Zotti, the deputy superintendent of curriculum and special services in the Springdale Public Schools in 1957, said of the children,

In the normal classroom they are the low achievers, the failures, and they know it. We are trying to give each of them the chance to succeed at something this summer, to get the feeling of having done something well. Once this happens, they have something to build another success upon.[43]

Despite these efforts, there was always the specter of the migrants' "otherness" lurking in the background. Eva Reder, president of the United Church Women of Springdale, put her finger on this key issue about the migrants' ordeal: "Though they live here and work here, some for extended periods, we do not know them and they do not know us. This project is designed to break down those barriers between us and to aid, if we can, in making their stay with us a pleasant and profitable one."[44]

The camp had been intended to meet a temporary though critical need, and after 26 years, it came to a closing point. As Demeroukas tells the story,

[T]he number of laborers staying at the camp rose and fell over the summers and through the years. Bumper crops might bring many workers, but crop failures or a slow-down in jobs forced families to move down the road to the next opportunity. By the 1960s a new threat was on the horizon – automated bean pickers. Increased mechanization meant that some crops could be picked more cheaply and effectively by machines than by people. Camp attendance began to drop.

[In 1948 the federal government had handed the camp over to Springdale with the agreement that the city would run it for 20 years.] In July 1968 the city decided to close the camp at the end of the summer and sell the remaining 160 cabins, only 40 of which were still occupied.

Rather than running a labor camp, the Springdale Housing Authority wanted to build a 170-unit low-income housing development on the camp's land, us-

ing federal funds to secure the 40-year loan. Groundbreaking on Phillips Plaza, named after Springdale's mayor, Park Phillips, began in the fall of 1969. By May 1971 the first renters were living in the $2-million-dollar project.

Today much of the camp exists only in memories and photographs. A few of the old cabins may still stand as outbuildings in area yards and fields. The camp's old community building, which once held the nursery school for migrant children, was moved to the southern part of the property. It serves as a Head Start school, continuing the structure's long tradition of sheltering youngsters in need.

Endnotes

[1] John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Bantam Book Edition, 1964). See also Daniel Nealand, "Archival Vintages for The Grapes of Wrath," *Prologue Magazine*, Winter 2008, 40:4. Accessed November 23, 2020, at https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/winter/grapes.html.

[2] "FSA Investigating Migratory Labor Problem in Section," *Springdale News*, February 13, 1941, pp. 1, 4.

[3] Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*, pp. 253-254. For information on where Dust Bowl migrants came from, see also Robin A. Fanslow, "The Migrant Experience," from *Voices from the Dust Bowl: the Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941*, Library of Congress, accessed at https://www.loc.gov/collections/todd-and-sonkin-migrant-workers-from-1940-to-1941/articles-and-essays/the-migrant-experience/

[4] "FSA Investigating," *Springdale News*, p. 1. Note also that, although Depression-era unemployment data are not always reliable, available estimates show that the Southwest had higher percentages of unemployment than other rural areas of the country. The estimate of Arkansas's rate of nonagricultural unemployment in 1933 was the third highest in the nation at 39.2 percent.

[5] "Migratory Farm Labor Camp Here Certain: Construction of $85,000 Project Is Expected To Begin by July 1," *Springdale News*, May 15, 1941, p. 1

[6] "Farm Labor Camp Probably Located on Park Avenue," *Springdale News*, March 13, 1941, p. 1.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid. See also Juanita Boone Duncan, *History of Washington County* (Springdale: Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, 1989), pp. 303-304.

[9] "Farm Labor Camp," *Springdale News*, p. 4.

[10] Marguerite Gilstrap, "To Remembered Happiness," *Flashback* 31:1, February 1981, p. 13.

[11] "Farm Workers Shelter Is Dedicated Saturday by FSA Officials," *Springdale News*, April 30, 1942, p. 1

[12] "Farm Labor Camp," *Springdale News*, p. 1. See also Florence E. Parker, "Labor Under the Farm Security Program," *Monthly Labor Review* 53:6 December 1941, pp. 1373-1373, 1382.

[13] "Migratory Farm Labor Camp Here Certain," *Springdale News*, May 15, 1941, p. 1. Also, for this and all statements attributed to Marie Demeroukas, see "Following the Crop" at https://shilohmuseum.org/project/following-the-crop.

[14] "Labor Camp Dedication Saturday; Ready for Works Monday," *Springdale News*, April 23, 1942, p. 1.

[15] "Farm Workers Shelter Is Dedicated," *Springdale News*, p. 1.

[16] Ibid.

[17] "Farm Products Bring Dollars, Labor Shortage Relieved by Center," *Springdale News*, December 3, 1942, pp. 1, 4.

[18] "Labor Camp Registered 1,302 People," *Springdale News*, October 21, 1943, p. 1.

[19] Rexford G. Tugwell, "Introduction: The Source of Our Wealth Is Our Land, and Our Civilization and National Well-Being Rest Upon It – Rehabilitation Program," *First Annual Report* (Washington: Resettlement Administration, 1936), p. 3

[20] "Unsolved Problems," *Report of the Administrator of the Farm Security Administration 1938* (Wash-

ington: U.S. Printing Office, 1938), p. 22.
[21] *Report of the Administrator of the Farm Security Administration 1939* (Washington: U.S. Printing Office, 1939), pp. 18-21. These pages include sections titled "Camps for Migrant Farm Workers," "Types of Migrant Camps," and "Mobile Camps and Labor Homes."
[22] *Report of the Administrator of the Farm Security Administration 1941* (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration, October 1941), pp. 21, 38-39. These pages include the section "Migratory Labor Camps," and "Table 4 – Statement of project development based on obligations to June 30, 1941 – Continued."
[23] *Report of the Administrator of the Farm Security Administration 1939*, p. 18.
[24] Mercer G. Evans, *The Migration of Farm Labor* (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration, December 31, 1939), pp 1-8. Mercer Evans, Director of Personnel and Labor Relations Division, FSA, presented this paper before the Committee on Problems in Inter-State Migration at the National Conference of Social Work in Buffalo, New York, on June 21, 1939.
[25] Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*, p. 256.
[26] James N. Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 70. In addition, Gregory noted that "important growers" worried that camps would become "havens for union organizers," and that more fortunate migrants tended to see a stigma associated with in living "in a government camp."
[27] Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*, pp. 251-252.
[28] Evans, *The Migration of Farm Labor*, pp 6-8.
[29] Guy C. Vanderpool, *A Time to Every Purpose: The Photographs of Jesse L. Charlton, 1937-1954* (Texarkana, Arkansas: Texarkana Museums System, 1999), pp. 6, 21-23.
[30] Duncan, *Washington County History*, pp. 303-304.
[31] Gregory, *American Exodus*, pp. 17-19. For additional description of the demographics of migrants, see also Fanslow, "The Migrant Experience," accessed at https://www.loc.gov/collections/todd-and-sonkin-migrant-workers-from-1940-to-1941/articles-and-essays/the-migrant-experience/
[32] *Springdale News*, ca. 1960s. Further information not available.
[33] Jeff Moser, Personal interview with Marie Demeroukas, May 2008.
[34] Gregory, *American Exodus*, pp. 68-69.
[35] Billie Jines, "The Way I Heard It," *Springdale News*, July 8, 1963.
[36] Grace Emery Wright, Personal interview with Marie Demeroukas, April 2008.
[37] "17-year-old Texas migrant worker," *Springdale News*, ca. 1960s. Further information not available.
[38] "Church Women Hear Facts on Local Schools," *Springdale News*, May 3, 1957.
[39] Ruth Ann Snipes, "United Church Women Help Migrant Children Keep Up in School," *Springdale News*, August 6, 1965.
[40] "Church Women Hear Facts on Local Schools," *Springdale News*, May 3, 1957.
[41] Letter to Mrs. Reder from a young labor camp volunteer in the Migrant Program sponsored by the United Church Women of Springdale, circa 1957. Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Manuscript & Printed Material Collection Manuscript #42, Box 5, Folder 6A.
[42] Ruth Ann Snipes, "Migrant Assistance Grows in Scope, Annual Dinner Slated to Aid Programs," *Springdale News*, May 5, 1967.
[43] Sara Murphy, "A Note on a Different Type of 'Labor Camp,'" *Arkansas Gazette*, August 6, 1967.
[44] "Church Women Hear Facts on Local Schools," *Springdale News*, May 3, 1957.

Note: The "Following the Crop" page on the Shiloh Museum website includes further information on the camp and a list of additional sources, which are listed under "Credits." (https://shilohmuseum.org/project/following-the-crop).

Springbrook Farm:

The Old White Farmhouse on the Prairie now part of regional medical center

By Nancy Hartney

Original architectural drawing of Springbrook Farm by Paul Young Jr. done for Herbert and Ruby Thomas, 1939-1940. Courtesy Harvey Smith Jr.

Prairie "with grass as tall as the head of a man on horseback"[1] spawned what would become Springbrook Farm on the edge of Fayetteville sometime in 1894. Today, little of the original farm remains – an old white farmhouse scarred by a shotgun blast to the ceiling flanks Appleby Road. Nearby, visitors can find a watercress endowed spring, and an old elm designated a Special Witness Tree. Family memories still linger, whispering within the house, stirring through the barns, and blowing across the land.

The acreage is dominated by Washington Regional Medical Center, North Hills Medical Park, Willard Walker Hospice, Washington County Health Department, and Fulbright Expressway/Flyover.

The first recorded land ownership was by the Hugh Lawson family, one of the original owners of Campbell Bell Department Store (1901) which still anchors the Fayetteville Square.[2] The Lawson family sold the property to Herbert Thomas (1899-1982) of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, circa 1940.

According to oral history, Thomas and his wife Ruby saw a house they loved while traveling in Virginia. Upon their return to Arkansas, he drew up plans with architect Paul Young, Jr. to build a farmhouse based on that image.

Thomas scoured the countryside for defunct log structures, usually

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Nancy Hartney writes non-fiction articles, short stories, and novels. She is retired from the Fayetteville Public Library, Research Services, and on occasion presents writing workshops for regional organizations.

View of the Old White Farmhouse at Springbrook Farm (back entry), 1960s. Courtesy Harvey Smith Jr.

schools and churches. Armed with an adze ax, he built two log cribs to bookend the long farmhouse. The center portion of the house, the porches, and upstairs bedrooms were likewise log construction. The house interior included knotty pine paneled rooms and wainscotting walls. Spacious closet and storage space, unusual for the times, were built into the house.

During the construction from 1939 to 1940, Thomas never lacked for workers. After all, the Great Depression hung heavy, and men lined up for the one dollar a day wages.[3]

Thomas never ran for political office, but he headed the campaign for his friend, J. William Fulbright, who served in congress in the House (1942-44) and Senate (1945-74). At one point, the two men had been inspecting a .410 shotgun in the wood-paneled den of the farmhouse. While they talked, the gun accidently discharged and blew a hole in the den ceiling. The ceiling has been left unrepaired as a "conversation piece."[4]

A member of the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees (1943-1951), Thomas was instrumental in the admission of Silas Hunt, the first Black student in the UofA Law School in 1948. The Thomas family eventually became interested in other endeavors and, after living at Springbrook Farm for 12 years, they sold the property to L. G. (Nick) Burrell circa 1952.

The Burrell family, considered city dwellers, were reported to have had little interest in working the farm, eventually allowing scrub and weeds to dominate the property. According to some accounts, "About all he did with the farm was tear down a barn and some of the outbuildings so he could hit golf balls down toward the pond." Burrell remodeled the old blacksmith shop to hold a poker table and installed a wet bar.[5]

In 1962, the Harvey Smith Sr. family purchased Springbrook Farm from the Burrells. At age nine years, Harvey Jr. moved into "what seemed like a fairyland. A great place to grow up."

The house has five fireplaces, two gas operated and three wood-burn-

View of the farmhouse today as it is situated near Washington Regional Hospital. Photograph by Nancy Hartney.

ing. Harvey Jr. recalls one Thanksgiving and again at Christmastime, standing in the living room, able to see three fireplaces at once, each brightly warming the house.

Without air conditioning, rooms were built with windows on three sides for air flow. The kitchen, an exception, sported only two windows. Two bookend bedrooms stand on either end of the house. Harvey Jr. occupied one he called his cabin. His parents occupied a larger bedroom on the opposite end, and his sisters shared the upstairs.

The Smith family returned the 160-acre farm to productivity, raising and selling Angus and Charolais cattle. The horse barn, with half brick flooring, was salvaged and put to use once again. The farm, double-fenced at the time, formed a lane round the acreage for horseback riding.

Three coveys of quail consistently roamed the farm property during those years. Harvey Jr. often mimicked their signature three-note trill and "they would answer." In fact, quail were so numerous, Harvey Jr. reported "watching them out the kitchen window around the family bird feeder."[6]

In 1970 the Fulbright Expressway bypass took approximately 25 acres off the northwest corner of the farm.

By 1976, Springbrook Farm with the farmhouse, pond, and spring were sold to Nancy Powell Kehn. Two original outbuildings at the entry to the circular driveway, still stand and are variously referred to as a carriage house, smokehouse, or, perhaps, a cold storage.[7]

Nancy's voice resonates when describing the farm. The "barn was my happy place. The half-brick floor, the chutes from the loft used to feed the animals, the tack room with step-up floor, and the magnificent stairs to the loft" delighted her. Memories of her sons raising homing pigeons and Beauregard, a black sheep given as a Christmas gift, linger. She recounts how she and Jim Powell found their first calf, umbilical cord still attached, in a ditch near their driveway. Originally named Barney, the calf soon became known as Barney Sue. Personal riding horses, a 30-year-old retired horse finishing his days where he had lived, and boarded horses created

a steady visitor flow. For years, a resident groundhog waddled along his footpath to the watercress-covered spring.[8]

In 1986, a group of physicians purchased 67 acres of the original Springbrook Farm between Appleby Road and the Highway 71 bypass from Harvey Jr. That property was developed into the North Hills Medical Park, fondly nicknamed Emerald City for its green roofs.

The Powell-Kehn family lived on the property for 16 years, eventually selling 40 acres to Washington Regional Medical Center in 1990.

When first sold to the hospital, the original spring water was used in the kidney dialysis unit. Later hospital renovations used a different water source.[9]

A 36-mile hiking-biking trail network, part of the Razorback Greenway, passes through portions of the Springbrook Farm/WRMC campus. Several years after Greenway construction, WRMC granted a permanent easement and tree preservation area to the City of Fayetteville, a nod to the once extensive prairie. In front of the present-day hospital building, an elm, designated an Amazing Tree of Fayetteville and a Special Witness Tree, still grows. Standing 75 feet tall, it dates from the 1700s.

Rockwork surrounds the original farm namesake spring. A plaque memorializing Harvey Sr. and wife Patricia A. Ware, stands not far from the gazebo. Other plaques dot the grounds and mark special donations from the community.

The WRMC Governing Board, at the time of purchase, was divided on whether to use or demolish the old farmhouse, seen by some "as warped, pieced together dwelling. Some thought the house too hard to heat, structurally unsound, and in poor repair."[10]

Others thought the house historical, a worthy keepsake, filled with wonderful energy.[11] In the end, the structure was saved and architect Paul Young, Jr.[12] designed the hospital around the house. It serves as Washington Regional Medical Foundation and Faith in Action offices.[13]

According to Jaclyn Keeter, Washington Regional Medical Foundation director of development administration, "The public loves the house. Receptions for hospital donors, scholarship recipients, and committee meetings" are examples of current usage.[14]

It should be noted that two landmark properties – Fayetteville Public Library, a non-profit IRS designated entity, and the Washington Regional Medical Center, a not-for-profit medical-health care system – are embraced by a diverse cross section of the Northwest Arkansas community. Both institutions remain in public/private hands rather than corporate control.[15]

While something is gained, something is lost with each generation. Buffalo, quail, and small game have disappeared. The original prairie mounds once molded into farmland, are finally converted into parking lots, highway-bypass, medical facilities, and strip malls.

Reflecting on his childhood home, Harvey Jr. comments, "It could not have been put to better use. I mean having a hospital there."

Endnotes

Much of this article is based on personal phone interviews. In some cases, more than one person commented on the same incident. In which case, both individuals are listed.

[1]Julia Sevarine Reed, *Solomon Tuttle of Old Mount Comfort, and his Descendants* (Fayetteville, AR: Washington County Historical Society, 1961), p. 83

[2]Roy Reed, "A Family Store Takes Stock," *New York Times Magazine*. A version of the article appeared in print on October 23,1983, Section 6, Page 74, of the national edition. An online version was viewed February 27, 2021.

[3]Nancy Powell Kehn, phone interview by author, Fayetteville, AR, 25 March 2021. Her memories are included herein as the last owner of Springbrook Farm. She lived there with her first husband, Jim Powell, who was killed in an auto accident. She and her second husband, John Kehn, also shared the farm before they eventually moved from Fayetteville to Hogeye. The house was constructed 1929-1941 during the Great Depression. At one point Hugh Lawson returned to the farm and spoke with Powell Kehn about building the farmhouse and how the construction provided men with work.

[4]Ibid. Also reporting same incident: Dr. Harvey Smith, Jr., phone interview by author, Fayetteville, Arkansas, January 6 and 14, and February 11, 2021, by phone; email to author April 16, 2021. Originally from Springdale, the Smiths lived in Pacific Palisades, California, returning to Arkansas, with subsequent purchase of Springbrook Farm in 1962. Dr. Smith is the son of Harvey E. Smith, Sr, and Patricia Althea "Patty" Ware Smith.

[5]Ibid. Also reporting same viewpoint: Roy Clinton, phone interview by author, Fayetteville, Arkansas, February 6, 2021. Smith served on the WRMC Board beginning 1984 and throughout the purchase of the Springbrook Farm.

[6]Interview with Harvey Smith, Jr.

[7]Ibid. Also interview with Nancy Powell-Kehn.

[8]Interview with Nancy Powell-Kehn.

[9]Interview with Harvey Smith, Jr.

[10]Roy Clinton, author interview by phone, Fayetteville, Arkansas, February 6, 2021.

[11]Brenda Clem Black, author interview by phone, Fayetteville, Arkansas, February 2, 2021. Black, the first woman appointee to the Board, served June 1979 to December 1999. The labyrinth near the pond was donated by the Westwood Gardens Black family.

[12]University of Arkansas News, "Architecture School Dedicates Young Gallery," July 14, 2006, accessed February 9, 2021, at https://news.uark.edu/articles/8983/architecture-school-dedicates-young-gallery. Paul Young Jr. served as architect for five state parks, Washington County Hospital (1950), and the UofA Law School (1951). His work can be seen in Northwest Arkansas area churches, schools, commercial, industrial, and other structures. He was married to Helen Appleby Young.

[13]Washington Regional Medical Foundation supports the Washington Regional Medical System through philanthropy and outreach services. Faith in Action, a volunteer-based service of the Foundation, provides homebound seniors with free non-medical services to maintain and promote independence.

[14]Jaclyn Keeter, author personal interview and house tour, Fayetteville, Arkansas, April 7, 2021. Keeter is Director of Development Administration, WRMC Medical Foundation.

[15]Washington Regional Medical System website accessed February 7, 2021, at https://wregional.com/about-us/history. History subsection.

Author's Note: Special thanks to Fayetteville Public Library librarians (Kathy Stevens, Cori Williams, Amy Nelson-Lamott) and Springdale Shiloh Museum of Ozark History staff (Rachel Whitaker) for their assistance. Gratitude to those interviewed by phone for their memories and gift of time.

WCHS 70th Anniversary: *The past provides direction for the future*

By Maylon Rice

As the Washington County Historical Society celebrates its 70th Anniversary during 2021, a review of the written record, via the issues of the early newsletter now developed into the quarterly journal *Flashback*, gives one a sense of the direction of future endeavors for the journal and the society.

Central at the core of today's Washington County Historical Society, 70 years after its establishment, can be found the need for an exacting written record of not only pre-settlement times of the early days prior to statehood, but a written history of families, businesses, communities, towns, and cities that make up the sum total of Washington County, a core for development of Northwest Arkansas.

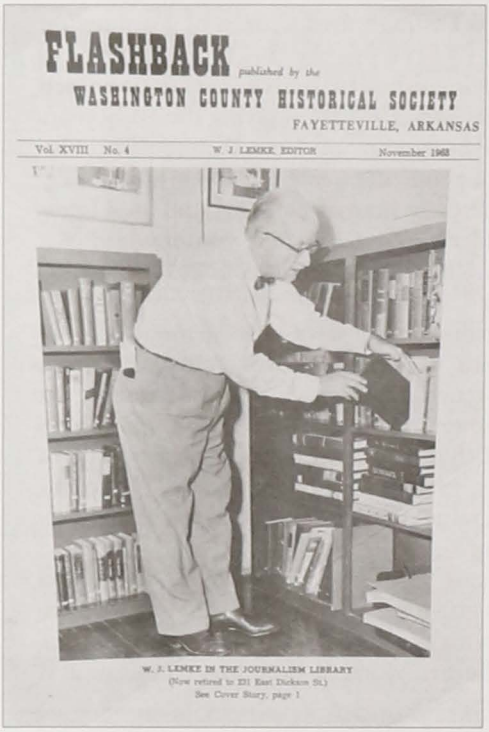
At the apex of this new developing society, one finds the extremely resourceful and talented hand for the printed word in W.J. Lemke.

As the initial president (for the years 1951-1953) and the publications editor for the *Flashback*, first a six-times-a-year newsletter, Lemke transformed it into a quarterly shortly before his death in 1968.

He was, according to a Fall 2019 article by J. B. Hogan, "a tireless worker," who not only "founded the Society but was its heart and soul from 1951 until his death in 1968."

Prior to forming the WCHS, Lemke in a pinch during World War

Maylon Rice is past president of the Washington County Historical Society; he was WCHS president 2017-2019 and currently serves on the Property Management Committee which oversees maintenance of Headquarters House and Ridge House.


FLASHBACK published by the
WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS
Vol. XVIII No. 4 W. J. LEMKE, EDITOR November 1968
W. J. LEMKE IN THE JOURNALISM LIBRARY
(Now retired to 221 East Dickson St.)
See Cover Story, page 1

The cover of *Flashback* in its 18th year featured Professor Walter J. Lemke, a founder and president of the Washington County Historical Society. He is seen in the library of the University of Arkansas Journalism Department, also founded by Lemke.

II, became a contributing associate editor for the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, especially beloved for his writings about the whereabouts of young servicemen in far flung battle postings. He kept a keen eye on the service inductions, promotions, battle injuries, and movements of the state's young soldiers, sailors, and airmen in the United States military service. And at the end of the war, as the academic ranks swelled with discharged and new professors, Lemke's UofA duties took him back to his running of the publications for the university and teaching journalism courses.

In the pages of the 1951 *Flashback* issues, Lemke possessed a keen eye for letters, documents, even old business ledgers to weave a written record of Washington County. He would labor over an account ledger for a Prairie Grove area merchant, extracting not only weights, measures, and costs of a crop against credit, but also involved the buyer and the seller into a historical record that today in family research is priceless. He would continue such writings in the years to come as well in the pages of *Flashback*.

During the 1951 writings Lemke stressed several ways to research one's family tree, and his interest in genealogy would later propel him to establish the WCHS into answering items of genealogical interest for people writing in, asking for research on their family's tree.

Lemke, as WCHS President, also wanted to lay a firm foundation for future generations with the development of the Washington County Distinguished Citizen Award, bestowed upon individuals within the county, which still today is an annual event at the October Annual Business Meeting of WCHS.

Since 1951, beginning with Sam Dellinger and Frank Lewis, and through 2020, with Dr. Margaret Clark and Susan Parks-Spencer, some

99 individuals have been named a Distinguished Citizen of Washington County.

The 2021 class of WCHS Distinguished Citizens has yet to be named as of this article being compiled in late July 2021. During the early years of Lemke as both president and editor, many of these Distinguished Citizen Awards were sprinkled throughout the year and often at birthday celebrations at the individuals' homes, as many from 1952 and until Lemke's death in 1968, were often elderly citizens. Lemke was honored as a WCHS Distinguished Citizen in 1965, "over his own polite protests of there were others more deserving."

To say that Lemke loved writing would be a misstatement. He developed and transcribed hundreds of letters, diaries, and pages from merchants' journals to lay out a template for the history of Washington County. Early on, Lemke and others compiled local topical pamphlets and "booklets," as he liked to call them, on local topics and offered them for sale through the WCHS. He also championed for the WCHS to initially rent office space for a functioning officer, at first staffed with individuals but later a part-time paid staff.

Not only was Lemke a brilliant historian and writer, he was joined with such notables as clubwoman and journalist Lessie Stringfellow Reed. This duo adopted a constitution and by-laws for the administration of WCHS that lasted well into the future. Much of their first constitution is used today with revisions over the years.

The WCHS *Flashback*, continues to offer two annual writing prizes for articles each year and welcomes submissions from interested citizens on all venues of Washington County, Arkansas, history, its land, people, and organizations.

As the books close on the 70th year of the WCHS, a vibrant collection of subscribers, its officers, and board of directors, and also including a vast array of writers, historians, re-enactors, preservationists, and citizens interested in the history of Washington County continues, despite a world-wide pandemic which has made us all shelter in place and curtail many of our collective gatherings of the past year and a half.

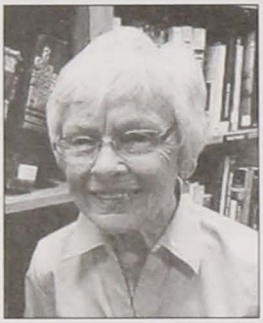
At the close of 1951, in the final written and published works of that year's *Flashback*, Lemke wrote an article entitled: "How About Joining Us in 1952."

That still applies in 2021, along with his closing words:

> *"Most pleasing to your officers and directors has been the widespread interest shown in our efforts to seek out and preserve the history of Washington County – as demonstrated by the 176 memberships we were able to obtain (in 1951). If you have read this issue of the FLASHBACK, and are not a member, how about sending in your check* [for a subscription and dues for 2022]."

Gretchen Gearhart
1932-2021

By Maylon Rice



Gretchen Gearhart. Photo by Maylon Rice.

The Officers and Board of the Washington County Historical Society are sad to announce the recent death of a long-time member, editor, and advocate for the county and state's history.

Gretchen Baerg Gearhart, 88, of Fayetteville, a long-time advocate and editor of Arkansas and Washington County history, died August 5. A memorial service in her memory will be held Saturday, October 9, at 2 p.m. in St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 1722 N. Starr Drive, Fayetteville.

She was born Dec. 28, 1932, in Fayetteville, the eldest and only daughter of University of Arkansas Entomology Professor William J. and Eloise Farris Baerg.

She was a former business manager and assistant editor of the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* from early 1992 to 1998. She was also the editor of the Washington County Historical Society's *Flashback*, a quarterly journal, 2003-2006. She was a WCHS Board Member 1994-95 and Vice President 1996-1997. She returned to be a board member in 1998 and served as Secretary 1999-2002.

Gretchen Gearhart with Judge Kim Smith, received the Distinguished Citizen Award. Photo by Maylon Rice.

In 2016 she was named as a Distinguished Citizen of Washington County by the WCHS. She continued writing for the WCHS with articles on the Cooperative Emergency Outreach ministry; Friends of the Fayetteville Public Library, and St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

She also authored an entry for the Encyclopedia of Arkansas on Samuel Conlon Nancarrow, a Texarkana native who became a world class musician of works on the player piano. She leaves five children, 10 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

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